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THE

PRESENT HOUR.

—SIT MIHI FAS AUDITA LOQUI.
VIRO

L O N D O N :

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T H E

P R E S E N T H O U R.

—Sit mihi fas audita loqui.

VIRG.

IN order to comprehend the present state of our political situation, it will be necessary to give a short sketch of the different events, which have brought about the late unexpected revolution.

All our fallacious prospects of success, in the Western hemisphere, had totally vanished before the meeting of Parliament. The people of England were now convinced that more was necessary, for the conquest of a great country, than merely to march through it, and that carrying on a war at such a distance, at-

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tended with such an enormous expence * was highly impolitic, if not absolutely impracticable.

While men's minds were deeply impressed with the melancholy event, of the capture of the army, under the command of the Earl of Cornwallis, Nov. 27. Parliament met, and was addressed by a speech from the Throne, which (if not directly, at least by implication) expressed it to be the intention of his Majesty's ministers, to continue the war in America, in the same manner, which had already proved so fatal.

During the Debate upon this subject (which lasted two days), the leaders of opposition, after having, with infinite ability and accuracy, painted the deplorable state of the country, called upon Ministers, for some specific declaration,

* Nearly one hundred millions having been already expended.

of their intentions, relative to the American war; if they did not mean the Address, should pledge them to a continuance of it. To which it was answered " that when Ministers
 Nov. 23.
 " called upon Parliament, to
 " vote a substitution of force, to replace
 " the army under the Earl of Cornwallis,
 " they must then meet the Question
 " fully*.

Previous to the discussion of the army estimates, it was thought proper, again to call upon Administration, to give some specific declaration, relative to this important subject, a Motion was
 Dec. 12
 accordingly made, by Sir James Lowther, " expressive of the war in
 " America, being ineffectual, and injurious to the true interest of this
 " country;" which drew from the first Minister the following declaration.

* The majority against the amendment to the Address was 89.

“ That it was resolved by his Majesty’s
 “ Ministers, that the mode of profe-
 “ cuting hostilities, internally, upon the
 “ Continent of America, should no
 “ longer be followed; and that the form of
 “ the war, should undergo a total change.
 “ Nay more, gentlemen would be con-
 “ vinced, by the estimates of the army,
 “ which then lay upon the table, that
 “ such were really the intentions of his
 “ Majesty’s Ministers, for they might
 “ see, they were not called upon, to vote
 “ any new levies, in order to replace
 “ those captured at York-Town.” With
 this declaration, the greatest part of the
 country gentlemen, seemed to be com-
 pletely satisfied. During the course of
 this Debate, Lord G——e G———e,
 Secretary for the American department,
 made a formal declaration*, “ that he
 “ would not hold his situation, upon

* This declaration produced the schism in the Ca-
 binet which soon after the recess of Parliament, effected
 his Lordship’s dismissal.

“ the

“ the condition, of signing any instru-
 “ ment, tending to avow the indepen-
 “ dence of America†.”

The debate of the Friday following, upon the army estimates, (being considered as a prolongation of the subject discussed on the Wednesday preceding) was treated by Mr. W. P—t, with such wonderful powers of eloquence, that he drew from Mr. R——y, the following explicit avowal “ That
 “ as we were now fairly beaten, he
 “ thought it would be madness, to at-
 “ tempt the reduction of America, by
 “ force of arms ;” in this declaration to a certain extent he was joined by the Lord A———e of S———d *.

† Sir James Lowther’s Motion was negatived by a majority of 41.

* The sentiments of these two Gentlemen importing so wide a difference from the declaration made by the Secretary for the American Department, rendered his Lordship’s dismissal a matter of state necessity.

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In this state was the political contest; when Parliament adjourned for the Christmas holidays.

During the recess of Parliament, a pamphlet was written, entitled a Letter to Mr. Jenkinson, which was eagerly read, and which strongly impressed upon the minds of men, the idea of an efficient Cabinet, by which the councils of the official one, were frequently overruled, and controuled. To this publication, may be ascribed a great deal of the jealousy, which began to display itself in the minds of the country gentlemen, at the meeting of Parliament, after the recess; they were now convinced, that there might be, still, some secret design, of carrying on the American war; for they saw, that the army, in that country, might be recruited, up to the number of 70,000 men, without the addition of any new levies: that the office of Secretary for the American department,

ment, was filled by Mr. Ellis, a gentleman, supposed to constitute one of the efficient Cabinet, to which there has been ascribed, a very peculiar degree of partiality for the American war; and that a new appointment of Commander in Chief in America had been bestowed upon a gentleman, remarkable, for the vigour and exertion of military talents.

From these circumstances, the country gentlemen began, seriously to take the alarm, and to conceive, that there might possibly be some degree of danger in continuing to confide so implicitly, in so unfortunate an Administration.

These dawnings of returning reason, were greatly increased, by an enquiry into the state of the navy, set on foot at this time, with great propriety and judgment, by Mr. F—x; during the course of which, he proved, with such perspicuity of argument and clearness of deduction,

deduction, that there had been mismanagement in our naval affairs during the year 1781, that upon the
 Feb. 20. question to that effect, in the house of Commons ; all the powers of ingenious corruption could only produce so small a majority, that the victory, was considered, by Ministers themselves, as little better than a defeat*.

The leaders of the opposition, did not fail to improve the advantages, they were daily acquiring, and therefore lost no time in bringing forward, such questions, as might enable them, to drag forth to public view, the real intentions of Administration, with respect to the cursed American war, emphatically so called.

General Conway moved an address to the Crown praying that any future
 Feb. 22. endeavours, to reduce America to obedience, by force of arms, might be relinquished.

* Mr. Fox's Motion was negatived by a majority of 19.

In the course of the debate upon this question the country gentlemen found, it that was high time to take the alarm, for there appeared a great dissonance in the language held, by the first Minister, and by the Secretaries for the War and American departments, Mr J——n having declared that he conceived it to be the intention of his Majesty's Ministers, to carry on the war in America, offensively and effectively. Mr. E——s seemed to breathe forth the precise ideas, of his predecessor in office, or as Mr. B——e expressed it; *Alter et idem* Feb. 22. *nascitur*, these differences of opinion amongst the ministers were pressed home to the feelings of the house, with infinite force and ability by Mr. F——x, and the motion was negatived by a majority of but one vote.

From this hour Lord North lost the confidence of the country gentlemen, notwithstanding the variety of efforts,

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which

which were used in private, to convince them, that he was serious, in his intention of desisting from the prosecution of the War in America, he succeeded only with one gentleman Sir W—D—*.

Feb. 27. General C—y again brought forward a motion similar to that which he had proposed a few days before, and Ministers now found themselves reduced to the irksome necessity, of yielding to the current of the times, and therefore opposed this motion by endeavouring to substitute in its stead, a bill empowering them, to treat with America, on the footing of independence.†

It required talents, equal to those, exhibited upon this occasion by Mr. F—x

* A Mr. F——h had the honor of effecting this conversion by a conversation of two hours at Sir W——s own house the day before General C——s 2d Motion, February 27th.

† A Bill which nothing but the terror of a total defeat could have engendered.

and

and Mr. W——P——t, to avert the success, of this manœuvre of administration, and in this they succeeded, so effectually, as to persuade a majority of 19 that it was no longer safe to trust that to Ministers, which they could do themselves. Upon this occasion Lord North found, for the first time, that the popularity of his private character was of little weight when opposed to the desire of relinquishing the American war.

General C——'s Motion was immediately converted into an address to the Crown, and was presented three days afterwards, attended by al-
March 1.
 most all those members who had voted for it *. To this address, his Majesty was pleased, to return an answer, which,

* It was remarked, that when his Majesty received the Address, General Arnold was standing at his right hand, and the Speaker with a precipitancy, rather unusual upon such occasions, presented the Address before one half of the Members had got out of their carriages.

though expressive of an acquiescence in the request of the House, did not mark much satisfaction.

Upon this occasion however, the leaders of opposition, conducted themselves with the utmost propriety, following up the victory they had gained, first by an Address of Thanks to the Crown, and then
 March 4. by a resolution of the House, declaring, those to be enemies to the country, who should advise the future prosecution of an offensive war in America.—Ministers had not courage to give any effectual opposition, to these resolutions, what they did, served only to mark their weakness and timidity.

It may not be amiss, to mark, how the prospects of opposition encreased. A few weeks before, the utmost object, of their most sanguine hopes, was, to be able, to fetter the American war, and to force the E—l of S———h from the
 head

head of the Admiralty. But having fairly got rid of the offensive war in America*, by the glorious support, of almost all the independent Members of the House of Commons, they now determined, to attempt, to drive from the helm of affairs, all those Ministers, who had been so unfortunate (to say the least of them) as to conduct this country, from the highest pitch of political greatness to the lowest abyss of misery.

In this attempt, they were powerfully supported by many, who being, by this new gleam of hope, at last awakened from a lethargy, which the disgraces and distresses of their country had not before roused them, felt a degree of satisfaction, from the success, of one conscientious vote, to which they had very long been strangers.

* It may not be amiss to remark, a distinction had been made, between the war *in* America and the war *with* America.

As the first essay, towards the accomplishment of this arduous
 March 8. undertaking; L—d J——n
 C———h made a Motion, tending in
 effect, to a removal of his Majesty's Ministers.—Upon this occasion L—d N—h
 made use of every argument, and every
 art, which a man playing for his last
 stake could be supposed to do. He
 begged, he prayed, he entreated the assistance
 of his quondam friends, the
 country gentlemen, endeavouring to support
 his character as a Minister, by his
 popularity, as an individual. But his
 talents, as a speaker, however splendid,
 were not suffered to impose upon the
 judgement of the House, Mr. F—x
 dissecting all the arguments, refuted them
 with astonishing ability*.

* It may not be amiss to remark, that his Lordship,
 notwithstanding the number of his private friends, was
 scarcely supported in the debate by any, except those under
 the actual pay of government.

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This Motion was rejected by a majority of ten *.

From this hour there has been an inter-regnum; for L—d N—h knowing, that such a majority, so constituted, was perfectly unequal, to the support, of any Administration, now determined to resign his situation, and the whole time of Ministers was occupied in attempts to acquire a decided majority, or to effect such a coalition, as might enable the greatest part of them, to retain their situations in order that the same system of government, which had already proved so ruinous might still subsist,

To effect this object, so desirable to his Majesty's servants, proposals of coalition were made to the B—d party and the E—l

* One of the few virtuous acts of L—d N—h's Administration, namely, the mode he adopted of negotiating the loan of this year, is said, to have lost him above 20 of his usual supporters. An useful lesson to any future Minister, who shall be weak enough to rest the stability of his power upon corruption!

of

of Sh——e, the Chancellor himself waited upon L——d R———m.

Altho' Mr. F—x had declared in Parliament, that he wished, to see an Administration formed, upon a broad bottom, yet it is said, that a coalition with any of his Majesty's actual Ministers (the Chancellor excepted) was rejected, and a total alteration of the system of government, insisted upon, together with an acquiescence, in the three following measures, to wit—The reduction of the influence of the Crown—The Bill for preventing Contractors sitting in Parliament. And the liberty of withdrawing the troops from America, if expedient.

These terms being strongly dissonant from that favourite system of government, which has so long prevailed, could not be complied with,

Lord N——h was prevailed upon, much against his own opinion, and inclination

tion to stand the test of another personal attack, contained in a motion, (to the same effect with that of L—d J—n C—h's) proposed by Sir J——n R——s*.

Every engine that a powerful and corrupt government could wield, was made use of, upon this occasion, in order to acquire a decided majority, the friends of Administration having determined to meet the question fairly, by putting a direct negative upon it. All the various arts of Parliamentary debate, were displayed in full force†. Sir W—m D—n, made a fruitless attempt, to rally the country gentlemen, in favour of L—d N—h, by suggesting a coalition, this hint was taken up by the L—d A——e

* The propriety and good policy of Mr. F—x's conduct in getting Sir J—n R——s to make this motion, is highly conspicuous, for by so doing he acquired the support of many of those gentlemen, who from habit or prejudice conceived themselves to be Tories, March 15.

* A very graceful and eloquent speech by Mr. J—T——d, drew from L—d N——h one of the ablest and most manly speeches he ever made in Parliament.

of S——d, and spoke to, with considerable ability ; but the futility of such an idea was exposed by the leaders of the opposition with their usual precision, accuracy and eloquence.

Although the number of members, who voted upon this question, amounted to 467, administration succeeded in putting a negative upon the motion only by a majority of nine.

L——d N——h having made this sacrifice of his better judgment, to the fallacious hopes of his colleagues in office, determined to avoid if possible, a third personal attack, which Mr. F——x gave notice, would be again brought on, the Wednesday following. He employed therefore every power he was master of, in order that some new arrangement might be made, before that time. The difficulties seemed to augment and the C——r is said to have declared that L——d R——m and his party had increased

creased so much, in the terms, they required, relative to some material alterations in the constitution ||, that he was afraid it would be absolutely impossible, for him to continue in office, if they came into power.

Matters were now so completely deranged that scarce any business was transacted at the public offices, and with respect to the business of Parliament, it was almost totally at a stagnation, in so much, that the only business of a public nature, which passed the House of Commons, was the Marine Mutiny Act, which was indispensibly necessary, the time of the former act, being well nigh expired, but the Consideration of the Taxes, the Attorney-General's Bill *, &c. were all postponed.

|| Such as annual and triennial Parliaments, addition to County Members, &c.

* This was the Bill, which was proposed in order to defeat General C——y's second Motion, by Mr. W——e his Majesty's Attorney-General.

Things were in this confused state, when the House met on Wednesday the 20th, in order again to try this important question; as every exertion had been made by the friends of Administration, in order that they might be able to muster as strong as possible*; they attended the House in very great numbers; and the appearance of the friends of opposition, was equally, if not more numerous.

In this awful moment of political contest, when each party seemed fully prepared again to try the force of their abilities, as well as of their numbers, Lord North to the utter astonishment and discomfiture of nine tenths of his friends, arose and declared, “ that the purport of the Motion was already fulfilled, all his Majesty’s Ministers having resigned, though they nominally remained in of-

* Sir John Eden had been sent for from the County of Durham, and Colonel Luttrell from Ireland.

fice, for the purpose of preventing confusion"—He requested therefore, that the House might adjourn till the Monday following, in order that time might be given for making the necessary arrangements.

This proposal was received like a clap of thunder, by nearly one half of the House, and like a gleam of the brightest sun-shine, by the other. It is an undoubted fact, that no kind of intimation, of this business, had been given to some of the noble Lord's most confidential friends, till after three o'clock. It is easier to conceive than to describe the effect, that so unexpected an event had upon one of the fullest Houses (at that hour of the day), that had ever been seen*.

* Treasury cards had been sent to all the friends and dependents of government, desiring their early attendance, as it was expected the question would come on without much debate.

L—d N——h's proposal of an adjournment was at last acceded to, by the House, after Mr. F—x had obtained from him, the most explicit assurances, that no political trick or manœuvre was intended.

In this manner, was at last accomplished the overthrow of a Ministry, which, though devoid of confidence among themselves, and unattended by the smallest shadow of success in any of their measures, had withstood, for upwards of twelve years * the attacks of a powerful, able, and determined opposition; having been supported, and upheld by a regular system of corruption ||, and

* L—d N——h was appointed first Lord of the Treasury, January 28, 1770.

|| This corruption was acknowledged by a vote of the House of Commons, April 6, 1780; by a majority of 18 upon Mr. D——g's Motion. Ministers were rescued from the consequences which would, most probably, have attended this resolution, by an unparalleled scene of confusion occasioned by Lord G——e G——n's mob, and by the dissolution of that Parliament in the summer following.

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by the popularity of the private character of the first Minister.

The nature of this short sketch, does not admit of a detail of the collateral circumstances, which contributed to the downfall of the late Administration.

Various are the conjectures with respect to the arrangements, which may possibly be made in forming a new Administration *. This fact will at least meet with universal assent, that a more unpopular, inactive, timid, or ungracious ministry than the last never governed this country.

A total change therefore of men, and of measures, from a conviction of past errors, is the most desirable event this country has to hope for, and such an

* The wishes of the people seem to be very unanimous, in desiring, that the choice may fall on those who have so long, and so ably, pleaded their cause, in the two Houses of Parliament.

event,

event, we may now trust the indefatigable assiduity, of a respectable opposition, has at length brought about.

If there does still remain a possibility of saving this kingdom from the various perils to which it is exposed, we have surely good grounds of hope from the efforts of men, who have virtue enough to covet, and courage to undertake so desperate a business, and that too, upon principles diametrically opposite to those of their predecessors. For they had decidedly pledged themselves to lay the axe to the root, of that many headed monster, corrupt influence, the fatal effects of which, they themselves have so long experienced, and have with such convincing eloquence, described as the real source of all our misfortunes,

The splendor and brilliancy of their talents is universally acknowledged, and that they will be most vigorously exerted
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no one can entertain a doubt; for they have, with infinite ability reprobated upon all occasions, the procrastinating inactivity of their predecessors.

The various evils, so necessary for the purpose of parliamentary corrupt influence, (by which alone the late Administration, has been for so many years upheld) such as corrupt jobs of all kinds, employment of men in the different executive branches of government, upon the score of some petty election interest, instead of that of talents or of merit, will now be totally done away.

We may trust also that all ideas of an efficient in contradiction to an official Cabinet, will now be erased from the minds of men; and that we shall once more behold, a vigorous and united Administration, who may possess power as well as spirit to dismiss those servants of the crown who may at any time be wanting in ta-

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lents or exertion ; for it is hoped, that miserable system of governing by department will not take place, nor shall we be kept any longer in the dark, with respect to the real cause of blame, and we shall be enabled to trace it (if any should be) to its true source wherever it may lie, by the responsibility of the first minister.

We have again a chance of beholding in his Majesty's servants, virtue enough to reward distinguished merit, and rigour equal to the task of inflicting punishment wherever it may be due.

It may be expected also that the incorruptible integrity and vigilant activity, of the new Cabinet, will secure from the two houses of Parliament, such a degree of confidence ; as may enable them to have time sufficient for probing to the bottom the resources of their country, and for applying them to the various exigencies of the state. For it is notorious

rious that the employment of every hour, and the exertion of every talent of the late administration, was but barely sufficient for obtaining the necessary Parliamentary support, so wretched is the system of corrupt influence.

Although we have every reason to hope, that “ from a total change of “ men and measures, founded upon a “ conviction of past errors”) the new Administration will cautiously avoid the rocks, which their predecessors have split upon, *Alienis periculis cautum*, and that they will secure to themselves, the confidence of their country, by exhibiting a conduct, perfectly consonant to their declarations when out of power, and diametrically opposite to that which they have with such infinite abilities, exposed to the contempt of the disinterested part of mankind ; yet it is highly necessary that we should avoid raising our expectations higher, than the distracted situa-

tion of our affairs, both at home and abroad will warrant.

A very small degree of recollection will convince us, that even to ward off the greatest part of the many misfortunes, to which we are at this moment exposed, will require as great a degree of talents; and of vigorous activity, as may be imputed to any set of men whatsoever; but to restore this country to a state, infinitely below what she enjoyed in the year 1774, must be the effect of unremitting attention, great exertions, and unlimited confidence, founded upon the united approbation of the people.

The new Administration will have to struggle with numerous and various difficulties; the baneful influence of corruption having already pervaded every quarter of these kingdoms—the Minister who shall attempt to reduce the means of extending that influence,
will

will ensure to himself, as secret, if not avowed enemies, all those who have been accustomed to reap the benefit of such corruption. And he will also have to encounter the envious resentment of those, who sharing in the obloquy of unsuccessful measures, will lose no opportunity of detracting from any efforts that may be attended with success; or of magnifying into notorious misconduct, those evils, which may be absolutely unavoidable, from the blunders already committed in the management of the different engines of government.

Besides, any set of men, who shall govern by a system so totally different from that of their predecessors, will, most probably, find the commencement of their Administration greatly embarrassed by the under-strappers of government, whose situations have been, most likely, secured to them, by their abilities to encrease corrupt influence; rather than
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by their knowledge of their real duty, or their expertness in business.

The Minister who shall step forward at a moment like the present, with the resolution of stemming the tide of corruption, and at the same time, flatters himself with being popular, ought to possess qualities which no man ever did possess.

He ought not only to be able to please both the Prince and the people, but also to establish in their minds the firm belief, that it is for their respective interests to place a confidence in him, and to do this, I am afraid, that though he should annihilate two thirds of the places, yet ought he to be able to retain more to dispose of, than if they had subsisted. Though he should dispose of the whole of the public money to the service of the state, yet ought he to have more to bestow in gifts, and in pensions, than if all the public money was appropriated to
that

that special purpose. In short, if the people will have a virtuous Minister, they must establish him on the basis of their own virtues ; for honesty and degeneracy, can no more incorporate, than fire and water.

Let us not, however, entertain a doubt, that upon the present occasion the new Administration will receive from the people, such support (by discountenancing the venomous discontent of those who have been the objects of corruption, and who can only be silenced by a contempt for their complaints) as may enable us to see the experiment tried, whether there still remains in this country, virtue sufficient to support a government, unaided by corrupt influence.

It will be highly proper for us to watch over the conduct of our new rulers with vigilance, and to make their former declarations the touchstone of their future conduct ;

conduct; but we must by no means suffer our minds, to be tainted with unfavourable impressions (which will be industriously attempted) until we shall have given their abilities, as well as their virtues a fair trial. We may rest secure, that there is not a possibility, that the efforts of an administration so sensible of the blunders of their predecessors, and so alive to the depravity of their system, should be attended with so total a want of success.

With respect to the situation of our affairs, although it would be injurious to Truth, not to admit their being in a most dangerous and perplexed state; yet at this moment of our dawning hopes, it would be highly impolitic to dwell upon the melancholy subject by entering into a long detail.

Suffice it to say, that at home the sinews of war (which have been so lavishly

vishly squandered), are well nigh exhausted, taxed almost to the last shilling *. Difficult indeed will it be to raise the taxes necessary even to provide for the interest of the debt already incurred; for those proposed by the late minister will most probably be in great part abandoned as pernicious and unproductive; their multiplicity and novelty afford a strong presumption that the noble Lord was well nigh at his wit's end, notwithstanding his boasted abilities in producing temporary expedients in finance †.

To raise the supplies in future, upon terms in any degree economical or be-

* Our inability to pay the interest of the debt already incurred, and to support the civil list, together with a moderate peace establishment, is very clearly pointed out in a short pamphlet, entitled "Facts and their Consequences," by the Earl of Stair.

† 'Tis true, he declared he had in reserve (possibly the very last in his budget) one tax which would produce 800,000*l.* per annum, supposed to be another halfpenny on porter.

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neficial for the public, will prove a most arduous undertaking, after the scandalous and enormous douceurs to which the money lenders have been accustomed *.

From Ireland we have much to fear, and little to hope. If we can retain a substantial connexion with that country, it is all we can now expect †.

We have for enemies three of the greatest naval powers in the world, namely France, Spain and Holland, without one ally; and in the European seas shall have to combat the force of these Powers, with a fleet scarcely equal to that of France alone, as we shall not

* Even the last most judicious of all Lord N—h's bargains, one year excepted, produced (without any new cause) above 5 per cent. premium at the opening.

† The heads of a bill lately sent from that country will unavoidably lead to a discussion upon that subject, which we are but little prepared for.

be able to muster more than thirty sail of the line for all our home service.

On the continent of America we now possess the three garrisons of New York, Halifax and Charles Town. If we can, circumstanced as we are, rescue the troops of two out of the three, and retain full possession of Canada and of Newfoundland, we may account ourselves highly fortunate.

In the West Indies, notwithstanding we have lost nearly one-half of our islands *, yet we are totally unequal to the defence of the remainder, while Monf. De Grasse shall continue master

* It is scarcely necessary to mention the loss of the island of Nevis, and of the thirty-five West India merchant-men, which is so industriously concealed from us by the late garbled letter of Sir Samuel Hood.

of those seas with a fleet avowedly superior to any we can muster*.

Difficult indeed will it be for the new Administration to withstand the various evils attending the inferiority of our fleet, commanded too by a gentleman whose unpopularity in that part of the world, must effectually baffle any efforts which chance might enable it to make. Almost all the commanders in that quarter have been appointed upon principles, and for reasons very different from those which the new Ministry mean to adopt. It is not therefore very likely that these gentlemen should be very assiduous in looking out for opportunities of gathering laurels to adorn the brows of their new employers; although at the same

* It is true, we may hope to be able to count upon forty-two sail of the line, if Sir George Rodney shall effect a junction with Sir Samuel Hood; but it is to be remembered that the fleets of our enemies, in that quarter, will amount to about sixty sail of the line.

time they would never shrink from executing whatever may come within the strict line of their duty.

As to Gibraltar, it is highly probable its fate will soon be the same with that of Minorca, for it is scarcely to be supposed that a few scattered ships having been fortunate enough to slip into that harbour, has been able to carry supplies sufficient to render that important fortress fully equal to oppose so formidable an attack as that with which it is again threatened*.

With respect to the Eastern World, to which the late Administration was so desirous of directing our attention (our prospects in that country not being quite

* Monf. le Duc de Crillon having acquired such glory by the brilliant conquest of Fort St. Philip, is to command the attack against Gibraltar, with 18,000 additional forces.

so clouded as in every other quarter) it must be confessed that the inattention of our enemies to their Asiatic possessions, has hitherto permitted us to retain a superiority. Whether we are still so fortunate is at least problematical.

Added to all these embarrassing difficulties, the moment in which these gentlemen are to enter upon their new situation, is also infinitely against them; for it is, that of action, and not of preparation; they are at once to give orders for conducting operations in all parts of the globe, with materials, perhaps, totally inadequate to the purposes of a vigorous and active Administration.

Under such circumstances we ought to be exceedingly cautious how we venture to disapprove the conduct of men, so shackled by the perplexed situation of
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our affairs, and hampered by the languid preparations of their predecessors.

The present state of this country is too notorious, for any one to be capable of believing, that any political nostrum can be found equal to the cure of all our evils. No: As the disorder (by encreasing gradually) has taken deep root, so the cure can only be effected by slow means. Whatever the industry and ability of men fired with the ambition of rescuing their country from the brink of destruction can bring about, we may firmly believe will be done; but we neither ought, nor can expect, that we shall rise at once, from so helpless a state, into security and splendor.

There are good grounds for supposing that our new Rulers may attempt some material alterations in the great outlines of our constitution, in order more effectually

festually to guard that most sacred of all blessings against those dangers to which it has so lately been exposed.— But we may safely rely upon the known experience and approved good sense of these gentlemen, and trust that they will not chuse the moment of difficulty or of danger, for doing that which may be better effected in times of peace, and of permanent security.

Although it has of late been very much the fashion to hold in a high degree of contempt all ideas of patriotism, yet so convinced is the author of this hasty publication, that such a principle does exist in the breasts of many of those who are to compose the new Administration, that he shall bestow upon them his most hearty wishes of success, which he will not withdraw, until he shall be convinced that their conduct does materially differ from those sentiments he has

has heard them so often express, and upon which his good opinion has been founded*.

London,
March 23, 1782.

* Since the above publication went to the press, the author is informed that such an arrangement has taken place as cannot fail to meet with the fullest approbation of the real friends of the constitution, and will most undoubtedly command their united support.

F I N I S.

